



# News Release

Media Contacts: C.J. Lind, 773.702.0766, [cjlind@uchicago.edu](mailto:cjlind@uchicago.edu)  
Shaleane Gee, 773.834.1960, [sgee@uchicago.edu](mailto:sgee@uchicago.edu)

## **FILM SCREENING: SELECTIONS FROM “THE WONDERS OF THE BIOGRAPH”**

April 20, 2006, 8 pm

Founded in 1895, New York City’s Biograph Company defined early film. Finding its subjects in train journeys and landscapes, city streets, vaudeville, and more, the Biograph celebrated the variety of modern American life and helped shape how turn-of-the-century audiences viewed the world. On April 20, 2006, at 8 pm, the Smart Museum of Art and the Film Studies Center at the University of Chicago will present two rare compilations of the Biograph’s silent film shorts dating from 1896 – 1903. Introduced by Tom Gunning, Professor of Art History and the Committee on Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago, the compilations exemplify the marvelous large-screen cinema that first made the Biograph Company famous.

The event will take place at the Film Studies Center at the University of Chicago (Cobb Hall, 5811 Ellis Avenue, Room 307) and is free and open to the public. Prints for the screening are courtesy of the Nederlands Filmmuseum, and will be presented in 35mm with English intertitles. The event is co-sponsored by the Film Studies Center, University of Chicago, and the Smart Museum of Art, and is held in conjunction with the exhibition *One/Many: Western American Survey Photographs by Bell and O’Sullivan*, on view at the Smart Museum through May 7, 2006.

Just as the Biograph Company shaped the ways in which audiences came to view modern life through the new medium of film, the sweeping and dramatic landscape photographs by William Bell and Timothy H. O’Sullivan helped open the eyes of nineteenth-century Americans to the western frontier. Featuring over 60 vintage prints from the 1860s and ‘70s, *One/Many* highlights the Smart’s recent acquisition of a substantial body of work by Bell and O’Sullivan, presenting it in the context of government-sponsored geological surveys and the larger cultural and artistic traditions that helped define the American West. Particularly impressive are their large-scale panoramic views, reconstructed from individual albumen prints for the first time since the nineteenth century.

*One/Many: Western American Survey Photographs by Bell and O'Sullivan* is curated by Joel Snyder, University of Chicago Professor of Art History, in consultation with Anne Leonard, Smart Museum Mellon Curator, and is presented in the Smart Museum's Richard and Mary L. Gray Special Exhibition Gallery from February 2 through May 7, 2006. The exhibition, catalogue, and related programs are generously supported in part by the Smart Family Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Rhoades Foundation, the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, and the Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago. Lead corporate sponsorship is generously provided by LaSalle Bank.



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**Smart Museum of Art**  
**University of Chicago**  
5550 S. Greenwood Ave.  
Chicago IL 60637  
(773) 702-0200  
website: <http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu>  
email: [smart-museum@uchicago.edu](mailto:smart-museum@uchicago.edu)

**Hours:**  
Tue, Wed, Fri      10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Thurs                10 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
Sat, Sun            11 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Galleries closed Mondays  
Café and Museum Shop open daily  
Admission is FREE.